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SUBJECT: VENEZUELA'S CANDIDACY TO A UN SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT; GLOBAL
WAR ON TERRORISM; 10/18/06

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's leading international stories include Venezuela's bid to the UN Security Council; and US President George W. Bush signing "controversial" legislation related to the US Global War on Terrorism.

Business-financial, center-right "INFOBAE" published a full-page interview with US expert on NGOs and philanthropy Janet Johnson, who was invited by the Public Affairs Section. The interview was headlined "US corporations boost volunteerism."

2. OPINION PIECES

- "Venezuela still lacks a majority to obtain a UN Security Council seat"

Ana Baron, leading "Clarín's" Washington-based correspondent on special assignment in New York, writes (10/18) "The standstill in the vote to determine who will succeed Argentina at the UN Security Council is far from being solved. After 22 rounds, Guatemala continues gathering 12 more votes than Venezuela, but neither of the two countries has managed to obtain the two-thirds required to win. And while calls to seek a consensus candidate have multiplied, prospects are not very optimistic.

"The voting was postponed until tomorrow and today an informal meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Consultation (GRULAC) will be held. However, every diplomat consulted by 'Clarín' agreed that the meeting will be fruitless as long as Venezuela and Guatemala do not agree to withdraw their candidacies. For the time being, this seems unlikely.

"Venezuelan Ambassador to the UN Francisco Arias Cardenas and Guatemalan FM Gert Rosenthal said yesterday that their respective countries would continue to compete. And this is not all. The US has reiterated its support for Guatemala, and Mercosur, the only group that could convince President Hugo Chavez to abandon, is not willing to do it. Quite the opposite.

"'Clarín' was able to confirm that, at least for now, President Nestor Kirchner does not want to put pressure on Venezuela, and that his Brazilian counterpart, Lula cannot do it either because he is on an electoral campaign.

"... US Ambassador to the UN John Bolton made it clear that for the moment there are only two candidates and that the voting will continue. 'Clarín' asked him whether the US would support Latin America in the event the region submits a new consensus candidate. He answered 'That question is hypothetical. The other regions agreed on one candidate; this did not happen here, and this is why we are

going through this situation.'"

- "Shouting "

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," writes (10/18) "In spite of the inevitable support from most South American countries, Venezuela seems to be losing the opportunity to obtain a seat at the UN Security Council.

"This foretold ending is not the result of US candidate Guatemala's greater ability, but of Hugo Chavez's aggressive diplomacy... and of the lack of a higher-quality discourse that can represent the many countries in the region that are against the White House's not less aggressive and grotesque policies. It is well known that shouting is useful only if one's purpose is to bewilder."

- "'A strong search of leadership also raises a strong opposition'"

Business-financial, center-right "InfoBae" carries an opinion piece by Sergio Galeana, international political analyst, who writes (10/18) "Uruguay could well be a good choice for a Latin American consensus candidate because it has good ties with the US while also being a Mercosur member.

"... Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has an open opposition for having expressed his support for countries like Iran...

"(Chavez's) strategy is aimed at accumulating power because he also seeks to establish himself as a regional leader. However, a strong search of leadership also raises a strong opposition.

"Chavez's violent anti-US speech also raised opposition from other countries.

"On the other hand, Mercosur's open support for Venezuela's candidacy should not be interpreted as an anti-US vote. There is not a prevailing feeling of support for Chavez in Mercosur."

- "Efforts to unlock UN voting"

Alberto Armendariz, New York-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nación," comments (10/18) "After a second day of arduous voting, and vis-à-vis Guatemala and Venezuela's inability to gather the support of the two-thirds required by the General Assembly to elect one of the countries as non permanent member of the UN Security Council, the idea of a third candidate of consensus gained strength.

"Chilean Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz pointed out that 'many Latin American and Caribbean ambassadors are making consultations to see if a new scenario can emerge'...

"... The countries being analyzed as possible candidates of consensus are: Uruguay, Panama, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic."

- "Bush signs controversial legislation that supports ill-treatment of suspects"

Leonardo Mindez, on special assignment in Washington for the leading "Clarín" writes (10/18) "US President Bush signed key legislation to further his 'global war on terror.' The new legislation not only creates special military courts limiting combatant enemies' rights to defense. It also gives a green light to CIA secret prisons all over the world, where harsh interrogation techniques which verge with torture are used to obtain information from alleged terrorists.

"... In this context, three weeks away from legislative elections and with Republicans hit by the Mark Foley scandal, Bush has again sought to shift public attention toward the threat posed by terrorism - the field in which he feels most comfortable and which gives his party the greatest advantage."

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